

January 24, 2007

EXHIBIT 31
DATE 1-25-07
HB 2

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Randy Butterfly and I was in a MVA, which resulted in multiple injuries. The most critical was done to my spinal cord, resulting in having quadriplegia. I am now in a wheelchair for the rest of my life. My accident occurred in Browning, MT from there I was flown to Great Falls to recover. Before my accident I worked in Europe doing live dinner shows. I also did a few movies and worked for one. I had the best time of my life.

I now reside in Missoula, MT at Eagle Watch, an apartment for the disabled. I have been living here for the past 5-6 years and I feel as though my life is at a stands still. I am trying to better my life, but it is very hard to change with the income I am given. I am on SSDI and have an income of \$545.00 after I pay my Medicaid Incurment. This amount hasn't changed in at least the past 5-6 years. After I pay my spend down I have less to live on than people who get SSI. They get \$623 a month and they qualify for more services. I get significantly less a month in food stamps and am not considered high priority for housing vouchers. I have had to live on \$545 a month over these last years, yet all my expenses have gone up—like, groceries, rent, phone, electricity, clothing, etc. Furthermore, I just completed a work assessment through Voc-Rehab and was told that it would not benefit me financially to work because whatever money I earn will have to be paid to my Medicaid spend down. So, to me, there is no incentive to work or better my financial circumstances. I am a person motivated to work but I am really frustrated with the system the way it is currently set up. I feel like I just get poorer and poorer. I do not even get to see a cost of living increase like people who have never work and get SSI. I do not think I should have to live on an income less than the people who have never worked and paid into the system.

Possible solutions:

- 1) Raise the monthly allowance of \$545 to at least what SSI is (\$623) and, in my opinion, I feel the people who work like me deserve get the SSI amount and more.
- 2) Lower the amount I have to pay for the monthly spend down so that I can keep more of my money to offset the difference in Food Stamps that I do not qualify for.
- 3) Change the work program so that it benefits me to work – change it so I can keep the majority of the money I earn on a job versus paying it all back to my spend down.
- 4) Raise the monthly allowance of \$545 to at least what SSI is – and, in my opinion, I
- 5) I feel the people who work like me deserve get the SSI amount and more.

I do not want to come across as complaining, I really am grateful to have the services I currently have. I realize these services are critical for my ability to live in my own in my apartment. However, I do want to express the increasing hardship it is living on the income I am allotted. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Randell Butterfly